

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/069,529

Examiner

Philip J. Chea

Applicant(s)

IBARAKI, HISAMI

Art Unit

2153

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to application filed 6/13/02.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,3-7,9-14,16,17,19,20 and 22.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 3/6/02 ~~6/13/02~~ 9/28/05
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with William Kratz on August 8, 2006.

The application has been amended as follows: Please see attached.

Reasons for Allowance:

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The present invention is directed to a method for detecting priority in a plurality of apparatuses. Each independent claim identifies the uniquely distinct features of "first judgment means for judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority on the basis of the priority of each of the electronic apparatuses identified by said first identification means; said first identification means comprising first communication means for receiving the identification information from the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state in response to the detection of the change by said connected state detection means, and transmitting the self identification information to the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state, said first judgment means comprising first comparison means for comparing the identification information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses received by said communication means with the self identification information, to judge whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority."

The closest prior art, Makoto et al. JP 11-237892, discloses a priority determination system fails to anticipate or render the above underlined limitation obvious.

2. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Art Unit: 2153

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Philip J. Chea whose telephone number is 571-272-3951. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:00-4:30 (1st Friday Off).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Burgess can be reached on 571-272-3949. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Philip J Chea
Examiner
Art Unit 2153

PJC 8/8/06



KRISNA LIM
PRIMARY EXAMINER

1. (Amended) A priority determination device provided in one of a plurality of electronic apparatuses that can be connected to one another, are respectively assigned priorities, and respectively have operation units each performing a predetermined operation, characterized by comprising:

connected state detection means for detecting the change in the connected state of said plurality of electronic apparatuses;

first identification means for identifying the electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state by communicating with the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses in response to the detection of the change by said connected state detection means;

first judgment means for judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority on the basis of the priority of each of the electronic apparatuses identified by said first identification means; and

first operation allowance/inhibition means for allowing the operation performed by said operation unit when said first judgment means judges that said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority, while inhibiting the operation performed by said operation unit when said first judgment means judges that said one electronic apparatus does not have the highest priority[.];

characterized in which priorities are previously set, respectively, in identification information for identifying said plurality of electronic apparatuses,

said first identification means comprising

first communication means for receiving the identification information from the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state in response to the detection of the change by said connected state detection means, and transmitting the self identification information to the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state,

said first judgment means comprising

first comparison means for comparing the identification information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses received by said communication means with the self

identification information, to judge whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Amended) The priority determination device according to claim [2] 1, characterized by further comprising

storage means for storing apparatus connection information representing the electronic apparatuses which are connected to one another on the basis of the identification information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses received by said first communication means,

said operation unit having the function of operating the electronic apparatuses connected on the basis of the apparatus connection information stored in said storage means.

4. (Amended) The priority determination device according to claim [2] 1 or 3, characterized by further comprising

power supply state detection means for detecting the change in the states of power supplies in the plurality of electronic apparatuses which are connected to one another,

second identification means for identifying the electronic apparatus in which the power supply is in the on state out of the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the states of the power supplies by communicating with the connected other electronic apparatus or apparatuses in response to the detection of the change by said power supply state detection means,

second judgment means for judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority on the basis of the priority of each of the electronic apparatuses identified by said second identification means, and

second operation allowance/inhibition means for allowing the operation performed by said operation unit when said second judgment means judges that said one electronics apparatus has the highest priority, while inhibiting the operation performed by said operation unit when said

second judgment means judges that said one electronic apparatus does not have the highest priority.

5. (Original) The priority determination device according to claim 4, characterized in that said second identification means comprises

second communication means for receiving the identification information, together with power supply information representing the states of the power supplies, from the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the states of the power supplies in response to the detection of the change by said power supply state detection means, and transmitting power supply information representing the state of the self power supply, together with the self identification information, to the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state, and

said second judgment means comprises

second comparison means for comparing the identification information for the electronic apparatuses in which the power supplies are in the on state on the basis of the power supply information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses and the self power supply information which have been received by said second communication means, to judge whether or not said one electronic apparatus out of the electronic apparatuses in which the power supplies are in the on state has the highest priority.

6. (Amended) The priority determination device according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 [to] or [5] 3, characterized in that said operation unit comprises a speech recognition operation unit that performs a speech recognition operation.

7. (Amended) A priority determination device provided in one of a plurality of electronic apparatuses that can be connected to one another, are respectively assigned priorities, and respectively have operation units each performing a predetermined operation, characterized by comprising:

power supply state detection means for detecting the change in the states of power supplies in the plurality of electronic apparatuses which are connected to one another;

identification means for identifying the electronic apparatus in which the power supply is in the on state out of the electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the states of the power supplies by communicating with the connected other electronic apparatus or apparatuses in response to the detection of the change by said power supply state detection means;

judgment means for judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority on the basis of the priority of each of the electronic apparatuses identified by said identification means; and

operation allowance/inhibition means for allowing the operation performed by said operation unit when said judgment means judges that said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority, while inhibiting the operation performed by said operation unit when said judgment means judges that said one electronic apparatus does not have the highest priority[.];

characterized in which priorities are previously set, respectively, in identification information for identifying said plurality of electronic apparatuses, said identification means comprising

communication means for receiving the identification information, together with power supply information representing the states of the power supplies, from the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the states of the power supplies in response to the detection of the change by said power supply state detection means, and transmitting power supply information representing the state of the self power supply, together with the self identification information, to the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state, said judgment means comprising

comparison means for comparing the identification information for the electronic apparatuses in which the power supplies are in the on state on the basis of the power supply information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses and the self power supply

information which have been received by said communication means, to judge whether or not said one electronic apparatus out of the electronic apparatuses in which the power supplies are in the on state has the highest priority.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Amended) The priority determination device according to claim [8] 1, characterized by further comprising

storage means for storing apparatus connection information representing the electronic apparatuses which are connected to one another on the basis of the identification information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses received by said communication means,

said operation unit having the function of operating the electronic apparatuses connected on the basis of the apparatus connection information stored in said storage means.

10. (Amended) The priority determination device according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 7 [to] or 9, characterized in that said operation unit comprises a speech recognition operation unit that performs a speech recognition operation.

11. (Original) A priority determining method provided in one of a plurality of electronic apparatuses that can be connected to one another, are respectively assigned priorities, and respectively have operation units each performing a predetermined operation, the priority determining method according to claim 1, characterized by comprising the steps of:

detecting the change in the connected state of said plurality of electronic apparatuses;

identifying the electronic apparatus or apparatuses, other than said one electronic apparatus, connected after the change in the connected state by communicating with the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses in response to the detection of the change;

judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority on the basis of the priority of each of the identified electronic apparatuses; and

allowing the operation performed by said operation unit when it is judged that said one electronic apparatus has the V highest priority, while inhibiting the operation performed by said operation unit when it is judged that said one electronic apparatus does not have the highest priority.

12. (Original) The priority determining method according to claim 11, characterized in which priorities are previously set, respectively, in identification information for identifying said plurality of electronic apparatuses,

said identifying step comprising the step of

receiving the identification information from the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state in response to the detection of the change by said step of detecting the change in the connected state, and transmitting the self identification information to the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state,

said judging step comprising the step of

judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority by comparing the identification information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses received by said communication means with the self identification information.

13. (Original) The priority determining method according to claim 12, characterized by further comprising the step of

storing apparatus connection information representing the electronic apparatuses which are connected to one another on the basis of said received identification information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses,

said operation unit operating the electronic apparatuses connected on the basis of said stored apparatus connection information.

14. (Amended) A priority determining method provided in one of a plurality of electronic apparatuses that can be connected to one another, are respectively assigned priorities, and respectively have operation units each performing a predetermined operation, characterized by comprising the steps of:

detecting the change in the states of power supplies in the plurality of electronic apparatuses which are connected to one another;

identifying the electronic apparatus in which the power supply is in the on state out of the electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the states of the power supplies by communicating with the connected other electronic apparatus or apparatuses in response to the detection of the change by said step of detecting the change in the states of the power supplies;

judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority on the basis of the priority of each of the electronic apparatuses identified by said step of identifying the electronic apparatus in which the power supply is in the on state; and

allowing the operation performed by said operation unit when it is judged that said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority, while inhibiting the operation performed by said operation unit when it is judged that said one electronic apparatus does not have the highest priority[.];

characterized in which priorities are previously set, respectively, in identification information for identifying said plurality of electronic apparatuses,

said identifying step comprising the step of

receiving the identification information, together with power supply information representing the states of the power supplies, from the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the states of the power supplies in response to the detection of the change, and transmitting the power supply information representing the state of the self power supply, together with the self identification information, to the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state,

said judging step comprising the step of

judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus out of the electronic apparatuses in which the power supplies are in the on state has the highest priority by comparing the identification information for the electronic apparatuses in which the power supplies are in the on state on the basis of the power supply information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses and the self power supply information which have been received.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Amended) The priority determining method according to claim [15] 14, characterized by further comprising the step of

storing apparatus connection information representing the electronic apparatuses which are connected to one another on the basis of said received identification information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses,

said operation unit operating the electronic apparatuses connected on the basis of said stored apparatus connection information.

17. (Amended) A priority determination program executed by a processing device in one of a plurality of electronic apparatuses that can be connected to one another, are respectively assigned priorities, and respectively have operation units each performing a predetermined operation, characterized by comprising:

processing for detecting the change in the connected state of said plurality of electronic apparatuses;

processing for identifying the electronic apparatus or apparatuses, other than said one electronic apparatus, connected after the change in the connected state by communicating with the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses in response to the detection of the change;

processing for judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority on the basis of the priority of each of the identified electronic apparatuses; and

processing for allowing the operation performed by said operation unit when it is judged that said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority, while inhibiting the operation performed by said operation unit when it is judged that said one electronic apparatus does not have the highest priority[.];

characterized in which priorities are previously set, respectively, in identification information for identifying said plurality of electronic apparatuses, .

said identifying processing comprising

processing for receiving the identification information from the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state in response to the detection of the change in the connected state by the processing for detecting the change, and transmitting the self identification information to the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state,

said judging processing comprising

processing for judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority by comparing the received identification information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses with the self identification information.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Amended) The priority determination program according to claim [18] 17, characterized by further comprising

processing for storing apparatus connection information representing the electronic apparatuses which are connected to one another on the basis of said received identification information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses,

said operation unit operating the electronic apparatuses connected on the basis of said stored apparatus connection information.

20. (Amended) A priority determination program executed by a processing device in one of a plurality of electronic apparatuses that can be connected to one another, are respectively assigned priorities, and respectively have operation units each performing a predetermined operation, characterized by comprising:

processing for detecting the change in the states of power supplies in the plurality of electronic apparatuses which are connected to one another;

processing for identifying the electronic apparatus in which the power supply is in the on state out of the electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the states of the power supplies by communicating with the connected other electronic apparatus or apparatuses in response to the detection of the change in the states of the power supplies by said processing for detecting the change;

processing for judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority on the basis of the priority of each of the identified electronic apparatuses; and

processing for allowing the operation performed by said operation unit when it is judged that said one electronic apparatus has the highest priority, while inhibiting the operation performed by said operation unit when it is judged that said one electronic apparatus does not have the highest priority[.];

characterized in which priorities are previously set, respectively, in identification information for identifying said plurality of electronic apparatuses,
said identifying processing comprising

processing for receiving the identification information, together with power supply information representing the states of the power supplies, from the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the states of the power supplies in response to the detection of the change, and transmitting power supply information representing the state of the self power supply, together with the self identification information, to the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses connected after the change in the connected state,
said judging processing comprising

processing for judging whether or not said one electronic apparatus out of the electronic apparatuses in which the power supplies are in the on state has the highest priority by comparing the identification information for the electronic apparatuses in which the power supplies are in the on state on the basis of the power supply information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses and the self power supply information which have been received.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Amended) The priority determination program according to claim [21] 20, characterized by further comprising

processing for storing apparatus connection information representing the electronic apparatuses which are connected to one another on the basis of said received identification information for the other electronic apparatus or apparatuses,

said operation unit operating the electronic apparatuses connected on the basis of said stored apparatus connection information.

23. (Cancelled)